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Pryor, Jackson, 1816-
Papers, 1830-1897 -

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The business papers of Jackson Pryor (1816-), businessman, farmer, and educational benefactor of Jasper, Marion County, Tennessee, were given to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. Vera Alexander Russell, Nashville, Tennessee, in July, 1940.

Approximate number of items: ca. 100

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers of Jackson Pryor, covering the period from 1830 to 1897 and containing approximately 100 items, consist mainly of accounts, business correspondence, licenses, stockholders' shares, receipts, land deeds, notes, and slave bills of sale.

Accounts, notes, and receipts are for the period of 1830-1897. These are also concerned with Pryor's mercantile business in Jasper. The dates, goods received, and prices are included in the accounts.

In 1849 Pryor had a partner named Chaudoin and in 1850 one named Kelly. He was not a partner in Pryor, Prigmore & Company of Jasper. Licenses of 1845-54 issued to Pryor by the State of Tennessee authorized him to be a merchant.

Pryor seems to have purchased the greatest bulk of his supplies from Charleston, South Carolina, and to some extent from Nashville. Of course many purchases may have been arranged verbally within the immediate area of Jasper, and a few are noted from nearby counties. From his Charleston contacts he bought indigo, madder, camphor, coffee, sugar, scotch snuff, dry goods, etc. In 1847 a representative of P. Melvin Cohen and Co. of that city says hopefully that his stock of indigo is of "the best Spanish float." From Nashville Pryor procured dry goods, powder, coffee, tobacco, salt, and other groceries. John Ramage, 1847, reports that he "will have large supplies of salt out on the first rise of water."

Correspondence from Charleston merchants includes letters from Bowie, Barkin, and Bowie; Shepherd W. Green & Co.; P. Melvin Cohen & Co.; and Fleetwood & Lanneau. Nashville merchants represented are H. Kirkman & Co., John Ramage, and Shepherd Duncan & Co.

When their destination was Charleston, passengers or freight from or to Jasper went--usually by steamboat--from Chattanooga. Correspondents from that city are B. Chandler and James A. Whiteside.

Interests and activities of Pryor are reflected in his correspondence: the sale and raising of stock (hogs and cattle), which were driven from Jasper to near Leesburg, Virginia, and to Henry County, Georgia (1845, 1846); and his duties as commissioner for the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad (which became Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad) in its formative period (1845).

Several Civil War items are of particular interest. A letter written March 14, 1863, from a Camp near Tullahoma refers to the case of William Pryor. By G. S. Deakins, whose family came from the Jasper area, it is an answer to a plea of Jackson Pryor asking intercession for his brother, who is imprisoned in the Confederate camp. (William became a Union soldier, 1864.) The letter gives the opinion that William will be allowed to volunteer for service in the Confederate Army and draw an allowance for his family.

A wage-hour record dated July 4, 1863, is from a saltpeter mine. It is addressed to Jackson Pryor and contains the names of the employees, hours worked, and their wages. The saltpeter was doubtless being mined for one of the belligerents.

Two other items witness the difficulties encountered when Confederate money was depreciated. One is a suit filed in 1865 asking to be allowed to pay rental on a house in Jasper leased from Jackson Pryor in 1862 in Confederate bills; the other is a statement that a firm in Virginia, also in 1865, can meet their obligations in Confederate money.

Land deeds in the collection date from 1842-1897. They are all for land obtained by Jackson Pryor in the city of Jasper and in Marion County.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jackson Pryor, 1816-

Businessman, farmer, and educational benefactor of Jasper, Marion County, Tenn.; accorded honorary title of "General" by fellow citizens; Democrat; member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

- 1816 Born January 15, in Morgan County, Tenn.; son of Green H. and Biddy (Halloway) Pryor; oldest of twelve children
- Educated in schools of Marion County
- Engaged in farming
- 1838 Began selling goods in Jasper; several years later formed a partnership with W. S. Griffith; about two years afterward bought out his partner and carried on extensive mercantile business alone
- 1841 Married Beersheba L. Perkins, 1822-1881, of Georgia, who attended Sam Houston Academy, Marion County, where she met Jackson Pryor; she had four children, all of whom died young
- 1857 Sold business to I. P. Alexander and to former partner, W. S. Griffith, and returned to farming; farm situated just north of Jasper

Took no part in Civil War, but was accorded title of "General" as a title of respect by his fellow citizens (a brother, William, 1821- , who was a justice of the peace and for one term Tennessee State Legislator, was a Union soldier, provost marshal and scout; another brother, Washington, 1824- , largest land owner in Marion County, took part in the Mexican War but like his brother, Jackson, remained a farmer during the Civil War)

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- Sources: 1) Memorial and Biographical Record: an Illustrated Compendium of Biography, Containing a Compendium of Local Biography, Including Biographical Sketches of Prominent Old Settlers and Representative Citizens of Part of the Cumerland Region of Tenn....
Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1898.
- 2) W. M. Cameron. Memoirs of Marion County, Tenn., 1893-1946. Jasper, Tenn.: First National Bank, South Pittsburg, Tenn., and Marion Trust & Banking Co., Jasper, Tenn., n.d.

- 1882 Married Mary A. Hornbeck, 1839- , of Marion County
- 1889 With his brother, Washington Pryor, and with Col. Ashley L. Spears established Pryor Institute in Jasper, which when founded was the only high school in Marion County; named in honor of Jackson Pryor (Pryor Institute now the site of Marion County High School)
- 1898 A sister, Eliza J., widow of Isham P. Alexander, resided with him and his wife

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Accounts, bills of sale, notes, receipts, etc. -
1830-1845
2. Accounts, bills of sale, notes, receipts, etc. -
1847-1849
3. Accounts, bills of sale, notes, receipts, etc. -
1850-1851
4. Accounts, bills of sale, notes, receipts, shares,
etc. - 1852-1897
5. Slave bills of sale - 1851-1856
6. Documents - Land deeds, 1842-1897
7. Licenses, wage and hour record, miscellaneous - 1845-
1863
8. Correspondence - Business
9. Correspondence - Business